

Clinton Herald
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108 Great Places project moving forward today

Although few may be aware, today could prove to be a landmark day in Clinton.

Two state employees are visiting Clinton today in their role as "coaches" for the Iowa Great Places program. Local members of an ad hoc committee formed to generate a Great Places proposal will take the coaches on a trolley tour along the Clinton riverfront to highlight the wonderful amenities already in place, explain the planned improvements through the Vision

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Iowa program and then discuss the ideas dreamed up for the Great Places plan.

The local group has come up with a series of suggestions, projects and ideas that ultimately would redefine recreational opportunities and river access in Clinton by improving the public spaces along the Clinton riverfront and "connecting the dots" of existing public spaces, eventually producing a so-called Grand Promenade from the U.S. 30 bridge to Eagle Point Park, Clinton's crown jewel and the best spot to view the widest point of the Upper Mississippi River.

The elements of the proposal are wide in variety. There are some already planned projects, such as the lumber mill museum that has been a project of the Kiwanis Club in recent years and the North River Drive project developed by the Lyons Business and Professional Association.

Others are the brainchild of the Great Places committee, such as a public art garden near the foot of the U.S. 30 bridge and a disc golf course at Eagle Point Park.

Many elements are things that Clintonians over the years surely have considered as ways to rejuvenate the recreation opportunities in town — things like renovation of the 1,000 Steps at Eagle Point and the public beach on the Willow Island Harbor area.

We hope the coaches share our reaction to the "Even More Things To Do With A River View" Great Places proposal — absolute joy. When Great Places committee members presented their information to the City Council last month, we were impressed at the scope of the plan and found it to be an excellent blueprint for future development of our riverfront.

We're still waiting for more details on the Great Places program itself, as are many of the people behind the 140 invitations sent to the state. We feel Clinton's



project has a solid chance of moving forward because so much of it can be tied to what Gov. Tom Vilsack wanted when he started the Great Places initiative — instant results. But it also is a long-term plan for a reinvention of how we enjoy the mighty Mississippi.

Here's hoping everything goes well with today's coaching visit and also that the Great Places program itself lives up to everything the governor intended. And congratulations to the local group that has worked so hard to get to this point. There is more work to do, but the committee members' love for the Clinton area and desire to see it grow is evident in all the effort that has been put in so far.

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